



Elizabeth “Lizzie” Mary Bown Gibson (1870-1927)

*Niece of Missoula’s Madame, Mary Gleim, and is responsible for the
legend of Mary’s infamous large monument turned sideways.*

- **1870-Birth.** February 19, 1870 in London England to John Bown of England and Johanna Gleason of Ireland.
- **1891-Marriage.** John Randolph Gibson on March 10, 1891 in Butte, Montana. They had eleven children all born about two years apart from each other. Three of her children died: two stillborns and one daughter fell off a wagon near Anaconda and was run over by a team of horses. That daughter, Cassie, is buried in the Anaconda cemetery.
- Highly educated in England. Elizabeth attended a convent school and learned eight languages which served her well in later life. She helped miners read and write letters back and forth from their relatives in their homelands as most miners did not know how to read or write.
- **1890.** Elizabeth came to America to live with her Aunt Mary Gleim. It was her Aunt Mary who had directed and financed her education. Elizabeth came to America at her aunt’s insistence that she could provide a better life for her niece. Elizabeth’s younger brother, Benjamin came to America in 1891 as well. In 1892, Aunt Mary Gleim applied for and received guardianship of Benjamin, as he was quite a trouble maker and Aunt Mary Gleim believed she could handle the child. Mary was also very loyal to and cared very deeply for the future of her family.
- **Legend.** Elizabeth is responsible for the great legend surrounding Madam Mary Gleim’s stone. When her Aunt Mary died in 1914, she left Elizabeth and Benjamin her fortune consisting of \$100,000. Elizabeth wanted to do something special for her aunt and ordered a beautiful stone that cost \$10,000. When the stone was delivered to the cemetery, however, it was so large that it would not fit in the normal grave head space, therefore, the monument had to be placed sideways. The turning of the stone, however, developed into quite the local legend that the infamous madam had noted in her will that her cemetery stone was to be turned so she could forever wave to her ‘boys’ from the railroad. Mary Gleim left no provisions in her will except that her fortune be given to her niece and nephew. So, little did Elizabeth realize the kind of folk lore her tribute would become.
- After Mary’ death, Elizabeth and her family moved to Front Street and lived their remaining life in one of Mary’s buildings. Elizabeth and Benjamin sold off all Mary’s assets and she lived a very comfortable life.
- **1927-Death.** May 23, 1927 in Missoula, Montana.

Information provided by Kim Kaufman, historical re-enactor.